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The numbers are in, and they convincingly demonstrate the vitality and diversity of North Dakota agriculture, as well as the determination and resilience of North Dakota's 30,000 family farmers and ranchers.

The 2006 edition of *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics* also demonstrates the importance of agriculture to the economy of our state and nation. Our state leads the U.S. in the production of 15 important commodities – including spring wheat; durum; barley; canola; sunflowers including both oil and confectionary; flaxseed; all dry edible beans including pinto beans and navy beans; dry peas; lentils; oats; and honey. We are second in all wheat and third in sugarbeets. Thanks to the increasing interest in and demand for renewable energy, our state's ranking in soybean and corn production has increased to ninth and fourteenth, respectively.

Most remarkably, the record-setting numbers were achieved during an especially difficult growing season, when too much moisture prevented the planting of nearly a million acres, and drought caused diminished yields. Virtually the entire state was included in an agricultural disaster declaration in 2005.

The statistics contained in this publication are a valuable tool for producers in making planting and marketing decisions. Likewise, they provide the necessary information and historical perspective for agribusinesses, investors and policymakers to make decisions that help the entire agriculture industry more effectively meet future challenges and issues. Both as agriculture commissioner and as a third generation family farmer, I depend on this valuable resource. The administration, statisticians, technicians, enumerators and clerical staff of the National Agricultural Statistics Service have again done an outstanding job in providing our state and most especially its family farmers and ranchers with this statistical portrait of North Dakota's dominant industry.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture is proud to support the mission and work of the National Agricultural Statistics Service and is pleased to help bring you the 2006 issue of *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Johnson".

Roger Johnson
Agriculture Commissioner

